



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE DEPORTS 67 ALIENS TO EL SALVADOR AND MEXICO**

***9 MS-13 gang members were among those removed***

NEW ORLEANS — The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office here deported 67 foreign nationals to their countries of origin today, which included 46 criminal aliens.

The criminal aliens removed included 42 Salvadorans and four Mexicans. Nine of those deported to El Salvador were MS-13 gang members. Also known as Mara Salvatrucha 13, it is widely known as one of the most violent street gangs. ICE has recently targeted this gang to help rid the streets of criminals and make communities safer.

The MS-13 arrests were part of Operation Community Shield, an ICE initiative launched in January to target and dismantle violent street gangs across the country. ICE's combined authorities for enforcing immigration and customs laws are powerful tools in fighting the growth of criminal organizations. ICE has gathered thousands of names of known and suspected gang members from state and local law enforcement, and is comparing those names against immigration databases to determine immigration status and deportability. ICE also investigates money laundering, narcotics smuggling, financial crimes and other cross-border crimes typically committed by street gangs.

To date, Operation Community Shield has led to the arrest of hundreds of gang members nationwide, including more than 400 MS-13 street gang members. Operation Community Shield is designed to disrupt, dismantle and prosecute violent gang organizations by employing the full range of enforcement authorities and investigative tools available to ICE.

The ICE Detention and Removal Operations officers worked with the Plaquemines Sheriff's Department and the U.S. Marshal Service to help remove these aliens. The Mexicans were returned via the port-of-entry at Laredo, Texas. The Salvadorans were flown to San Salvador, El Salvador.

The El Salvadorans removed today traveled via government aircraft run by the U.S. Marshal Service, called the Justice Prisoner and Alien Transportation System (JPATS). JPATS is one of the largest transporters of prisoners in the world and handles hundreds of requests every day to move prisoners and criminal aliens nationally and internationally. ICE routinely deports aliens from various locations around the U.S. via the JPATS system to countries throughout the world.

These removals demonstrate ICE's commitment to restoring integrity to the nation's immigration system. ICE formally removed more than 161,000 aliens nationally in fiscal year 2004. More than half of those were criminal aliens.

There is an automatic 10-year bar against deported aliens from legally re-entering the U.S. "Anyone caught in the U.S. by any law enforcement office after having been previously deported will be presented by ICE officers to the U.S. Attorney for prosecution," said Robinson. "Reentry after deportation is a felony that can carry a possible 20-year prison sentence."

# ICE #

*ICE, the primary investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, was established to bring a unified focus to the enforcement of U.S. immigration and customs laws, with the principal goal of preventing violations by terrorists and other criminals who threaten the nation's security.*